

## **Rockford Historic Preservation Commission**

August 4, 2009 – 6:00 PM  
Conference Room B  
Rockford City Hall

**Present** Laura Furman, Maureen Flanagan, Mark McInnis, David Hagney, Tom Graceffa

**Absent** Doug Mark

**Staff** Ginny Gregory

**Others** Susan Benjamin, Julie McKeon, Ron Billy, Chandler Anderson, Bill Keith, Bruce & Karen Jasper

---

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **Nomination of the Valencia Apartments (500-518 Fisher Avenue) to the National Register of Historic Places**

Susan Benjamin and Julie McKeon presented the nomination of the Valencia Apartments for listing on the National Register. The buildings were designed in 1927 and 1928 by local architect Jesse Barloga. The four three-story buildings are significant under criterion C "architecture" for listing on the National Register for Historic Places. There are numerous characteristics of Spanish revival architecture including red inlaid tile and arched entranceways. The buildings are an amalgam of Mission style and Spanish baroque and Mexican architecture.

Although the apartments in each of the four 12-unit buildings are identical, the outside of each building presents its own variations on a theme. The building facing Court Street is the only one with a bell tower. The columns vary between diamond patterns and spiral patterns, balconies and lantern fixtures feature unique wrought-iron designs. The brick used on the buildings is natural clay, not red brick, to mimic missions in California. Arched entranceways create courtyards between the buildings. Landscaping creates a sense of privacy for the residents.

On the inside of the buildings, wood stairs with wrought iron spindles make up the staircase where you go down to the first floor and up to the second floor. Although the apartments are modestly sized, they are quite detailed. Wooden beams, lanterns, twisted columns and light fixtures all add to the uniqueness of the inside. Building three has square columns, but the others have spiral columns.

The basement of the Court Street building has a party room in it with a coat room. There are ceramic panels with various themes such as an ocean theme, northern Spain. There is an underground connector between buildings one and two.

Susan indicated the Valencia is currently undergoing a certified rehabilitation. On the second floor, the north and south units are being combined into a larger unit. Every effort is being made to keep everything as original as possible, even the sinks and bathtubs.

Ron Billy with Tyson and Billy Architects introduced himself and indicated his firm is the successor to Jesse Barloga's firm.

Tom Graceffa asked if there were blueprints available for the Valencia. Susan did not have any and stated the only place there might be some would be in the basement of the Valencia. Ginny indicated that if the City had a set, it would be in the basement of the Fire Department Administration building. Susan stated the original building permit cards are still in existence for the first building. The permits for each building were given at different times, beginning in late 1927.

**With no further questions or comments, the public hearing was closed at 6:20 PM and the regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission opened.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mark McInnis made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes for the meeting of July 7, 2009 as submitted. The motion was seconded by David Hagney and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Certificate of Appropriateness –713 East State Street (Shumway Market)**

Bill Keith, Street and Transportation Superintendant for Rockford's Public Works Department, presented the Rockford Area Arts Council's request to install a wood screen door at the front entrance of the Shumway Market Building. [Note: The City of Rockford owns the building; the RAAC is the tenant in the building.] This would allow the front door to remain open during pleasant weather and allow some air into the building. Bill showed a photograph of a wooden screen door found at Home Depot. The door had a narrow, simple frame around the perimeter and no cross bars of any sort. He planned to have the door stained rather than painting it. Bill believed there was a screen door on the building at one point.

David Hagney asked Bill how sturdy the screen door would be. Bill replied the City didn't want to spend a lot on the door as they were assuming it would be damaged at some point from someone pushing the screen or typical wear and tear. He indicated it was easier to replace the door than attempt to repair it.

Mark asked if it would be more appropriate to have a door with a replacement storm screen. Bill replied he didn't want to get that elaborate as the door was certain to be damaged. David asked if the door would be removed in the winter. Bill replied he would.

David asked if Bill was able to find a wider door with a rail. Bill replied that would be a special order. David asked if a custom order was more expensive. Bill replied it was and mentioned the City's funding shortage. He indicated the building has a limited budget and he wanted to have as much funding as possible for other maintenance issues with the building. David asked what the cost difference was between the custom order door and the simple wooden door. Bill believed it was around \$250 and the current proposed door was under \$100.

David wondered whether the door would last through the summer. Maureen stated the wood used for the wooden door looked rather thin. Bill indicated the thickness was over an inch.

Tom asked how wide the door opening was. Bill replied it was 34".

Bill requested the Commission choose a door if they did not approve his proposed door. David volunteered to look for one. Bill mentioned if an expensive door were put in place and was damaged, he'd be forced to pay for the same door again to replace it. Tom asked what the maximum amount was that could be spent without causing a funding issue. Bill replied around \$100-\$150.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **LAY OVER** the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**. A special meeting will decide this issue.

### **Certificate of Appropriateness – 924 Ridgewood Road**

Bruce Jasper, along with his wife Karen, explained they wanted to install some brass and copper up-lighting along the flower beds and around the pool. Bruce did not believe the light fixtures would be visible from the street, but would be along the ground next to plants, highlighting the house and a limestone wall. Bruce showed the Commission a sample photograph of the type of lighting units he planned to use. There will be two units per tree that go straight into the ground and all lighting would be behind a fence.

Maureen asked where the front door faced. Karen Jasper explained the front door was on North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, but the backyard was off of Ridgewood Road.

Tom Graceffa made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by David Hagney and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

### **Certificate of Appropriateness – 737 North Main Street (Manny Mansion at Burpee Museum of Natural History)**

Gary Anderson was not present to explain his request. The Commission reviewed the submitted drawings in his absence.

David indicated most of the requested changes seemed to involve replacing the porch rail with matching materials used to make repairs. Ginny pointed out there is one case where the Museum wants to replace the latticework with something different. They also planned to remove glass block and brick veneer to replace with matching renaissance stone and lattice detail along the porch. Ginny stated the changes were designed to get the home back in line with the materials originally used on it. The changes would be made to the west side of the building, partially visible from the street.

Maureen asked if the changes would be more visible once the museum expansion took place. Ginny believed it would. Ginny also mentioned the Rock River is counted as a right-of-way.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

### **Nomination of Valencia Apartments to the National Register**

Ginny reminded the Commission the criterion under which Valencia is being nominated under is:

Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Susan Benjamin suggested phrasing the recommendation for nomination as: As a distinguished example of Spanish Revival architecture by a master architect.

Susan explained the second and third story of the main building facing Court Street will merge the north and south apartments to make larger units. Chandler Anderson will be carrying out the remodeling and mentioned he is working with designer Sarah Bell.

Mark McInnis asked how the corridors will be handled. Julie McKeon explained there is an east and west stairwell in each building that goes from the first floor to the third with a common hallway connecting them. Common looking fire doors will be installed in the short passageway and left open but will close automatically in the event of an emergency.

Julie continued to explain once the apartments on the north and south end have been merged the obsolete doors will be walled over in cement or will remain in place. There will be no visible changes in the public areas other than cosmetics. Julie indicated most of the work will include remodeling bathrooms and kitchens, touching up, installing new carpeting and cleaning.

David Hagney made a **MOTION to RECOMMEND NOMINATION** of Valencia Apartments to the National Register. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

### **Possible Additional Local Historic District Applications**

Chandler Anderson introduced the concept of new local historic districts in the Garrison School area and the Coronado Haskell neighborhood. He believed the most effective tool used to improve Haight Village was turning it into a local historic district and wanted to improve the Garrison and Coronado Haskell neighborhoods in a similar manner. Chandler stated he was doing a lot of rehabilitation in those areas and wanted the areas to improve.

Laura Furman asked if anyone in the Coronado Haskell neighborhood suggested the idea of a historic district before. Ginny couldn't recall anyone from that neighborhood proposing a district before, but recalled mixed reactions to the idea at a Signal Hill neighborhood meeting she attended a few years ago. Ginny stated two-thirds of the owners of the parcels in the proposed historic district must sign petitions toward an historic district before it could become official.

Mark asked if Garrison would be adjacent to the Signal Hill neighborhood. Chandler replied it would be within Signal Hill.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Update on Violations – 400 Block of Kishwaukee Street

Ginny introduced photographs taken yesterday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, of the houses on the 400 block of Kishwaukee Street to the Commission. Ginny stated the large home is not completely painted yet but has been started. The satellite dish is laying in the yard and the home with a *For Rent* sign in front had a boarded up window. Ginny reminded the Commission the deadline for repairs is September 1, 2009; however, there are some repairs which will require a certificate of appropriateness but the Commission doesn't meet again until September 1<sup>st</sup>. Although Ginny has not yet received any applications for certificates of appropriateness, she did receive an email from the owner asking what was needed for an application. She sent him all the paperwork and informed him of the deadline to submit applications. She mentioned the Code Hearing Officer also gave September 1<sup>st</sup> as the deadline to meet code violations.

### Update on Violations – 404 North Prospect Street

Ginny explained Jim Pantazelos, owner of 404 North Prospect, has been to both Code Hearing and to Court and was given until September 1<sup>st</sup> to finish repairs. Ginny introduced photographs taken yesterday of the property. Three of the doors have been replaced with wooden doors but one of the doors had leaded glass in the oval frame.

Ginny explained she sent Mr. Pantazelos sample photographs of appropriate doors and informed him he would need to get approval for anything not similar to the samples. Although the door is wood it is not one of the approved doors. The consensus was that she should inform Mr. Pantazelos that this particular door needs to be replaced with one that has been approved.

Ginny pointed out the photograph of the garage door which was not plum with the side of the garage. There is a gap at the bottom and the top of the door sinks backward into the garage. However, it is the style of door that the Commission approved.

Ginny reminded the Commission all work is supposed to be completed on the property by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## STAFF REPORT

Ginny explained Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissions (IAHPC) is offering \$250 per Commission to attend a workshop for certified local governments in Quincy in September. If no one on the Commission is not interested in attending, Ginny would like to use the \$250 to attend.

There was some discussion concerning setting a date for a special meeting to resolve the issue of the screen door at the Shumway building. Ginny agreed to email everyone with a set of options to set up the meeting.

With no further business, Maureen Flanagan made a **MOTION** to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mark McInnis and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.